

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1979

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1274

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AFM INSTITUTIONALIZATION

REF: A) LISBON 1221; (B) LISBON 1025

SUMMARY: CONSULTATIONS ON INSTITUTIONALIZATION ARE CONTINUING. SOCIALISTS RESPONSE IS DESCRIBED. CDS FINDS ROSA COUTINHO MORE FLEXIBLE THAN EXPECTED. MODERATE OFFICERS MAY BE CARRYING OUT EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN TO FRIGHTEN LEFTIST LEADERS AND ENCOURAGE MODERATES IN AFM ASSEMBLY. END SUMMARY

1. CONSULTATIONS:

PROCESS OF CONSULTATION BETWEEN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT'S (AFM) COMMITTEE OF EIGHT LED BY AD. ROSA COUTINHO, CONTUED THIS WEEK WITH A MEETING BETWEEN SANCHES OSORIO OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

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(PDS) AND CHARAIS OF COMMITTEE. COMMITTEE IS TO REPORT RESULTS OF

ITS CONSULTATION TO NEXT MEETING OF AFM ASSEMBLY OF 200.
AFM ASSEMBLY MEETING HAS NOT YET BEEN SCHEDULED.

2. SOCIALIST RESPONSE TO AFM PROPOSALS:

EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED DRAFT COPY OF SOCIALIST WRITTEN RESPONSES
TO COMMITTEE OF EIGHT INSTITUTIONALIZATION PROPOSALS (REF A).
HIGHLIGHTS ARE:

- (A) TRANSITION PERIOD SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED, BUT THERE MUST
NOT BE TWO GOVERNMENTS, TWO POLICIES, AND TWO POWERS, JUST ONE;
- (B) ELECTED ASSEMBLY MUST BE SOVEREIGN. AFM AND OTHER ELEMENTS
COULD, HOWEVER, COMPRIZE NATIONAL COUNCIL TO PASS ON CONSTITU-
TIONALITY OF LAWS;
- (C) PS AGREES THAT PRESIDENT MUST HAVE CONFIDENCE OF AFM,
BUT WITHOUT PREJUDICING THE FREE PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES.
(COMMENT: HOW THIS TO BE DONE NOT EXPLAINED.) PS SUPPORTS COSTA
GOMES FOR PRESIDENT;
- (D) CURRENT COALITION OF AFM WITH POLITICAL PARTIES MUST BE
MAINTAINED.
- (E) NEW GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE JOINTLY RESPONSIBLE TO PRESIDENT AND
ASSEMBLY.

3. ADDITIONAL POINTS RAISED BY THE SOCIALISTS INCLUDE:

- (A) MUNICIPAL AND PRECINCT ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD BEFORE THE
ASSEMBLY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.
- (B) AN ORGAN TO INSURE THE LINK BETWEEN THE AFM AND THE COALITION
PARTIES SHOULD BE CREATED.
- (C) DELIBERATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD INCLUDE
THE QUESTION OF PUBLIC LIBERTIES (I.E. TRADE UNION LIBERTIES).
- (D) SUSPEND THE CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION SESSION DURING THE
CAMPAIGN.

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- (E) SUPERVISE WHAT IS CARRIED IN THE AFM BULLETIN AND ON RADIO
AND TV, WHERE ATTACKS AGAINST POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE APPEARED,
CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF APRIL 25.
- (F) REAFFIRM THE PRINCIPLE OF COALITION GOVERNMENT.

4. CDS VIEW OF ROSA COUTINHO:
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS) PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL

HAS DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL TO THE AMBASSADOR THE FLAVOR OF CDS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COMMITTEE OF EIGHT (REF B) LED BY ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO. COUTINHO IS CATEGORIZED BY CDS AS PORTUGUESE POPULAR MOVEMENT (MDP) IN HIS POLITICAL OUTLOOK; YET CDS FOUND HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE EIGHT IN PRESENTATION TO CDS FAIR AND EFFECTIVE. FREIAS DO AMARAL SAID COUTINHO WAS OPEN, PRAGMATIC, AND FLEXIBLE IN HIS APPROACH TO INSTITUTIONALIZATION QUESTION. COUTINHO DID NOT HESITATE TO CRACK DOWN HARD ON COMMITTEE MEMBER CHARAIS WHEN HE GOT OUT OF LINE. CDS FOUND COUTINHO'S WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO THEIR VIEWS VERY ENCOURAGING. THEY SAID THAT COUTINHO'S ANGOLA EXPERIENCE HAD CHANGED HIM CONSIDERABLY FOR THE BETTER.

5. COUP RUMORS AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION:

VAUGE RUMORS OF A COUP HAVE BEEN RIFE IN LISBON SINCE MORNING OF MARCH 6. SEVERAL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CONTACTS RELATE COUP RUMORS TO ACTIVITIES OF MODERATE OFFICERS IN ARMED FORCES WHO ARE BECOMING BOLDER IN THEIR EFFORTS TO FORCE SHOWDOWN WITH RADICAL IN THE AFM OVER QUESTION OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION. AN ATTEMPTED COULD BE MADE AT NEXT AFM ASSEMBLY MEETING TO FORCE OUT THE AFM COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CCPMFA) MEMBERS AND REPLACE THEM WITH ELECTED MEMBERS. THIS WOULD ACCELERATE SCENARIO DESCRIBED BY SOCIALIST (REF A), WHICH ENVISAGED A VOTE IN THE AFM ASSEMBLY AGAINST THE CCPMFA AFTER ELECTIONS.

6. A SPINOLIST ARMY OFFICER TOLD DAO MAR. 7 THAT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT MODERATES WERE TRYING TO DO. MODERATES, ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, ARE CONFIDENT THEY HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMY, AND THEY DO NOT FORESEE THE NEED FOR AN ACTUAL COUP EFFORT. THEY FEEL THEIR PURPOSES CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY FRIGHTENING THE AFM LEFTISTS AND RALLYING THEIR HITHERTO SILENT COLLEAGUES TO THE SIDE OF THE MODERATES AND DEMOCRATICALLY REMOVING LEFTISTS FROM POSITIONS OF POWER WITH GOP AND AFM.

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7. COMMENT: WE HAVENOT HAD ANY INDICATION YET FROM OUR DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONTACTS THAT THEY ARE COORDINATING THEIR RESPONSES TO AFM COMMITTEE OF EIGHT. THIS WILL WEAKEN PARTIES ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. IN VIEW OF SOME OBSERVERS, IT WILL GIVE COMMITTEE FREE HAND IN DESCRIBING TO AFM ASSEMBLY WHAT PARTIES HAD AGREED TO, AND IT ENABLES COMMITTEE OF EIGHT TO PLAY ONE PARTY AGAINST ANOTHER.

9. INSTITUTIONALIZATION ISSUE IS BRINGING TO A HEAD THE DISCONTENT WITH THE LEFTIST LEADERSHIP IN AFM EXISTING AMONG MODERATE OFFICERS IN THE ARMED FORCES. IF MILITARY MODERATES ARE SKILLFUL AND HAVE LINED UP THEIR SUPPORT CAREFULLY, THEY MAY WELL SUCCEED IN BRINGING ABOUT AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN POLITICAL BALANCE WITHOUT RESORT TO FORCE. ON THE OTHER

HAND IF THEY ARE CLUMSY AND OVERPLAY THEIR HANDS, ESPECIALLY
IF BLOOD IS SHED, THEY MAY END UP BY SHIFTING THE
POLITICAL BALANCE EVEN FURTHER TO LEFT.
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